

EOD makes Bagram, Afghanistan safer

Story by Sgt. Stephanie Hall
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – In order to reduce the amount of dangerous unexploded ordnance and small arms, the 797th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) and the 441st Ordnance Battalion (EOD), conducted an ammunition reduction operation Friday at the East River Range.

The ammunitions that were destroyed had been stockpiled at a safe-hold area until they could be destroyed Friday, said 1st Sgt. Gilbert Rodriguez, first sergeant of the 797th Ord. Co. (EOD). EOD teams conduct ammunition reduction operations every two to four weeks.

This particular operation included more than 6,000 pounds of explosive weight with more than 10,000 pieces of small arms and various unexploded ordnance, said Rodriguez.

The EOD team calculated that the fragmentation radius was more than 860 meters and the blast radius was more than 1,700 meters.

“It was way to big to do here on Bagram Air Field,” said Rodriguez. “Part of the safety is to calculate the blast and fragmentation radius for every piece of munitions that we dispose of so that nobody is in that blast area.”

Munitions do pose a threat to coalition forces as well as the local communities, said Rodriguez. “That’s why we dispose of them.”

“These (munitions) could potentially be used against us,”



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Whitley

More than 6,000 pounds of unexploded ordnance goes up in flames Friday, as EOD teams conduct an ammunition reduction operation.

said Rodriguez. “We gather them and destroy them so they can’t be used by whoever would want to shoot them at us.”

The operation included four complete teams made up of EOD qualified personnel from the 797th Ord. Co. (EOD) and the 441st Ord. Bn. (EOD).

Personnel from the battalion augmented the teams because

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Gardens add collage of color to Bagram

Story and photo by Pfc. Kelly Hunt
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – In the mist of sand and rows of tents stands a garden, full of life, rooted with hope. Diversity holds its ground against all logic that says it shouldn’t be here. Pallets of color enliven the area and the beautiful simplicity of it all warms the soul.

These are the gardens of Bagram Air

Field. Housed in the Air Force and Marine compounds these flowers and plants fill a special place in the hearts of those who witness them and bring memories of home one seed at a time.

It began six months ago when the hands of Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Randy Letschum transformed sand into fertilized soil and planted the first flower seed into the ground of the Air Force Compound. He made each flowerbed and planted each plant, said Air Force Tech.

Sgt. Cindy Matzen, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group Combat Weather Team, who took over the garden when Letschum returned home.

“Every story has a beginning and this one begins with him,” she said.

Around the same time, Lt. Col. Jim Dickson, 513th Marine Attack Squadron, heard the news that his six-month tour had been extended to a year. Determined to

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



"We continue to develop information that leads us to believe that al Qaeda wants to continue to strike the United States," Ashcroft said Sunday.

Ashcroft: Al Qaeda threat is real

WASHINGTON — Attorney General John Ashcroft warned Sunday of the "very real potential" of new terrorist attacks against United States targets.

But he also said more than 100 al Qaeda activities around the world had been disrupted by the war on terrorism.

Ashcroft was speaking after a purported al Qaeda audio tape was broadcast on an Arab TV station threatening that "America will pay a very high price" for putting Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, detainees on trial.

"The potential for us to be hit again is a very real potential," Ashcroft said appearing on "Fox News Sunday."

"The kinds of efforts that we're making, the kinds of information we're sharing with the American people, signal that we believe that there is such a potential — but that we minimize the potential whenever we're alert."

Ashcroft indicated that U.S. efforts to prevent terrorist attacks have met with some success.

"I feel confident that more than 100 activities on the part of al Qaeda have been disrupted and interrupted around the world," Ashcroft said. "I don't know if I would say they are all al Qaeda. The network of terror has a changing face and there are different aspects of it and different players."

Ashcroft's comments came as an audio tape said to be of Osama bin Laden's deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri aired Sunday on the Dubai-based Arab television network Al-Arabiya.

The speaker on the tape identifies himself as al-Zawahiri. He says the United States and

its allies will pay a "very high price" if alleged al Qaeda and Taliban detainees at the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, are tried in military tribunals and face the death penalty.

The tape makes no mention of bin Laden. It tells those "working or cooperating" with the United States that America is too weak to protect itself or its allies.

"The crusader America will pay a very high price for any harm that will affect any of the prisoners that they are holding," the tape says. "Those who are allies or helping America will pay the same price. Those who are handing over our brothers will pay the same price."

U.S. looks to boost checks on non-visa air passengers

WASHINGTON — Authorities are considering tougher airline security measures for passengers entering the United States from a group of nations whose citizens do not need visas, Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge said Sunday.

Appearing on CNN's "Late Edition", Ridge said authorities may add "enhanced security measures" for arriving passengers who are citizens of the 27 visa waiver countries, which includes many Western European countries.

The measures under consideration, he said, include "subjecting these individuals and their baggage to far more rigorous screening than ever before."

"We're going to have an entry-exit system based on a machine-readable passport, so we'll be able to verify and validate they are who they claim to be," Ridge said.

Ridge stressed that passengers from the visa-waiver countries still will not be required to obtain U.S. entry visas.

"The countries that have, over the years, been involved in the visa waiver program have historically been allies, have been great friends and supporters of ours. And obviously it's in our best interest to try to bring as many people into this country for a lot of different reasons.

"Our economy depends on it. A lot of them go to school here. We basically have helped educate leaders, future leaders because of their availability of education and exposure in this country."

On Saturday, the United States suspended two programs that allow some international air passengers to transit through the country without a visa.



Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi: "America actually is fighting [Osama bin Laden], but fighting bin Laden led us to this reality."

Gadhafi: U.S. made bin Laden a saint

CNN — Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi said in a rare interview with American television Sunday that the United States made Osama bin Laden a saint and prophet, and that the fugitive al Qaeda leader "has become a symbol for defending the Islamic world."

The comments came during an interview with George Stephanopoulos recorded Wednesday for broadcast on ABC's "This Week."

"America is not doing that intentionally or on purpose," Gadhafi said through an interpreter. "America actually is fighting him, but fighting bin Laden led us to this reality."

Gadhafi said in southern Africa, there are "pictures of bin Laden everywhere." And he has seen children wearing T-shirts with pictures of bin Laden.

"They are not Muslims," Gadhafi added. "We say bin Laden is a criminal. We say bin Laden is a terrorist. But they say, 'bin Laden, may God protect and save him.'"

ABC News said the interview was Gadhafi's first with an American news network since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Gadhafi acknowledged that fighting al Qaeda is difficult.

"Al Qaeda is like the cancer or tuberculosis; it cannot be detected in the early stages," he said. "Only at a later stage, you find out that you are affected."

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make the most of his time here, he took a chance and turned to a hobby of his from home.

Through trial and error his garden began to grow.

One at a time, the seeds sprouted, encircling his tent with flowers of all colors, bright red tomatoes and various plants.

Plants from the United States and from the local area join together in these compounds in a splash of vivid aromas and tastes — symbolizing triumph and beautifying the piece of Afghanistan these troops touch.

“The garden is very therapeutic,” said Matzen. “It’s a little bit of home that everyone enjoys and they appreciate us doing this.”

Never a gardener herself, she couldn’t allow the work of Letschum to be forgotten with his departure.

“Once I saw and enjoyed the garden I thought, ‘We can’t let this go, we can’t let this die.’”

She enjoys the atmosphere it brings, she said. “You can just come out here, water the garden and forget about work.”

And so she embraced the garden’s beauty and dedicated her free time to ensure its survival, she said. But much to her surprise, others came forward as well and contributed to the new mission.

Seeds and plants were sent here to Dickson and Matzen from friends back in the U.S. and soon the vision was trans-

formed into reality.

Wishful thinking alone wasn’t going to keep these plants alive, though. The sand was the foundation and it needed some help. That would take creativity.

“I used local dirt, lots of coffee grounds, some wood shavings and then some fertilizer,” said Dickson who now has a healthy garden growing.

Matzen turned to the wisdom of her peers for planting advice. She listened to suggestions from what troops did with their home gardens and took to the advice of an Air Force reservist that worked on a farm at home.

Both gardens are noticed and admirers, said Matzen and Dickson, are always giving compliments to the gardeners.

“It’s a morale builder,” said Airman 1st Class Jake Poire, 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron. “Not like a TV or a Playstation, but it is here, like a sign that there is something to take care of, something to take pride in.

“If they work on it, it’s something they can see grow during their six months here and for those that don’t work on it, it’s just something that makes the whole place better. Something nice to look at.”

Troops do make the difference on the garden, said Matzen. Service members from the Marine Compound have been known to stop at ‘The Marine Garden’ to pull weeds and enjoy the site, said Dickson.

Having this garden makes the time in Bagram pass easier, said Dickson. “There’s nothing better than sitting out in the gar-



AirForce Tech. Sgt. Cindy Matzen and 1st Lt. Judy Milanowski tend to the garden they volunteer to keep alive and well, located within the AirForce compound.

den, smoking a cigar and looking at the stars at night,” he said.

Though Dickson’s hobby is his garden, he encourages troops to find their niche and use it to make their stay in Afghanistan a bit more enjoyable.

“I recommend that people do what makes them happy,” said Dickson. “If you like knitting and quilting, then knit or quilt. If you like sewing, start sewing.

“Being here a year is a very long time,” he said, “Being here a year with no hobby is an even longer time.”

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of the company’s many missions. “The battalion really helped out with the amount of people that was needed,” said Rodriguez.

Rodriguez said that a lot of the munitions come from caches that are found during sweeps and operations.

“Some of it is also collected at (local) police departments,” he said. “Citizens will bring them what they may have had, or take the police to places where they may have found a couple of rounds,” he said. “(Locals) also call up and turn munitions over to us.”

It’s very important for these munitions to be found and destroyed, said Rodriguez.

“There are reports of children stepping on mines or getting hit by UXOs, and the more munitions we pull out of the local area, the safer they’re going to feel and they don’t have to worry about this,” he said.

Although completely clearing Afghanistan from landmines and other potentially dangerous UXOs may seem impossible to some, it is not impossible to Rodriguez and his team.

“It may take years, but it’s not impossible,” he said. “There’s a finite number of mines out there, and no one really knows how many, but there is a finite number; it’s just a matter of time and effort.”

Coalition plans wireless system in Iraq

Story by Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – A DoD official spoke Friday about coalition plans to let contracts for a cellular phone system and to reconstruct the telecommunications system in Iraq.

Linton Wells II, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for networks and information integration, told Pentagon reporters that the cell phone system could be up and running by November.

Telecommunications systems support all ongoing reconstruction efforts in Iraq: security, restoration of essential services, government, economy and the internationalization of the coalition effort. Iraq has never had a cell phone network, Wells said. The former regime put in 320 cell phone towers, but never followed through with service.

DoD officials said the winning bidders may build off any of the old facilities in their regions. "The objective is to return the Iraqi telecommunications system to its pre-war activity to enable government operations, but also ... to introduce advanced technologies," Wells said.

There is limited cell phone service in the Baghdad area. A rudimentary service was installed in May and members of the Coalition Provincial Authority and Iraqi officials can now communicate in the city.

There will be three regional cell network contracts awarded. This will ensure the whole country gets coverage. Wells said with one contract there would be the temptation to just cover Baghdad and the larger cities. By breaking it into three regional contracts, he said he hopes smaller cities and towns will get communications.

Wells said he expects to have the wireless contracts signed in early September.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building:

"Phone Booth." Stuart Shepard finds himself trapped in a phone booth, pinned down by an extortionist's sniper rifle.



Tomorrow's movie will be "Shanghai Knights.."

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Tuesday
Bagram:	Dusty H: 99F L: 72F	Mostly clear H: 100F L: 72F
Kandahar:	Dusty H: 106F L: 88F	Dusty H: 108F L: 86F
Kabul:	Dusty H: 97F L: 70F	Dusty H: 99F L: 70F
Uzbekistan:	Clear H: 97F L: 70F	Clear H: 95F L: 54F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)



Harvick becomes the first driver in history to win the Brickyard from the pole.

Harvick wins Brickyard 400

INDIANAPOLIS — Kevin Harvick's victory celebration Sunday was more eventful than his win in the Brickyard 400.

First, Harvick tore up his right rear tire and blew off the fender while spinning doughnuts on the yard of bricks that marks the finish line at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Then, he and team owner Richard Childress knelt to kiss the bricks.

And, finally, Harvick and the crew of his No. 29 Chevrolet followed a new tradition at the speedway - started by open-wheel racer Helio Castroneves in the Indianapolis 500 - by climbing the fence.

"Hey man, if you're going to win big, you might as well leave your mark," Harvick said. "You might not get another chance. It was just a lot of fun."

The big celebration was well deserved after Harvick turned a tight race into a runaway, pulling away in the last 10 laps for the biggest win of his budding NASCAR career.

"I don't even know if I can explain it. It's so awesome," Harvick said after his damaged car was pushed to victory lane by his crew.

He took over at the end of the 160-lap race.

Harvick was second, battling Jamie McMurray for the lead and trying to hold off Winston Cup points leader Matt Kenseth and teammate Robby Gordon on a frantic restart with 16 laps remaining, when a multicar crash broke out behind the leaders.

The leaders raced back to the flagstand before taking the yellow flag, and Harvick found himself on top.

"I always look forward to restarts because I usually make up some ground," Harvick said. "Jamie went high, we went low, Robby followed us and it was like the seas parted. That was pretty much the race."

"When we got out there in clean air, and I saw that Robby was doing what he had to do to keep them back there, I just put it in cruise control and tried not to make any mistakes."

The green flag came back out on lap 151, and Harvick got a great

jump. He was 10 car-lengths ahead of second-place Gordon at the end of that lap and just kept racing away.

Harvick wound up 2.754 seconds — about 20 car-lengths — ahead of runner-up Kenseth, who grabbed second place on lap 157, passing McMurray as Gordon faded.

Harvick, who averaged 134.554 mph, became the first driver in the 10-year history of the Brickyard race to win from the pole. He didn't dominate, though, leading only 33 laps, while Tony Stewart was out front for a race-high 60.

Furyk tames Tiger to win Buick Open

GRAND BLANC, Mich. — Jim Furyk has a knack for keeping Tiger Woods from defending his titles.

Furyk shot a 4-under-par 68 Sunday to win the Buick Open at 21

under, beating Woods by two strokes and preventing the world's top-ranked player from repeating at Warwick Hills.

Furyk's past four PGA Tour victories have come at tournaments where Woods was the defending champion. Furyk also wrested titles away from Woods at this year's U.S. Open, last year's Memorial and in the Mercedes Championship in 2001.

He has won twice in a year for the first time in his career and will be looking for his first winning streak



Jim Furyk rebounded strongly Sunday from his few mistakes, including a missed 3-foot putt for birdie on No. 16.

in two weeks at the PGA Championship.

"This would be a good time, with a major championship coming," said Furyk, who owns nine PGA Tour titles. "It's just nice to have some confidence in your game. I feel good about my game."

Furyk has been in the top 10 in 13 of 19 tournaments this year, already tying a career-best mark, with two victories plus a second- and a third-place finish.

"It's definitely my best year," he said. "It's been my most consistent. I've won two tournaments, and I've never done that before. I've won a major championship, and I've never done that before. I lost the playoff at Doral and had opportunities to win some other tournaments. I've won more money (over \$4 million) than I've ever won."

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Woods carded a 66 in the final round to finish at 19 under, tying for second place with Chris DiMarco, Geoff Ogilvy and Briny Baird. It was Woods' final tune-up before the PGA Championship in two weeks, which will be his last chance this season to win a major.

Woods had a chance to become the first repeat champion at the Buick Open since 1965.

One of Woods' errant shots hit a fan, who needed three stitches to close a cut on his head.

Furyk played mistake-free golf other than having a three-putt bogey from 26 feet on No. 11 and missing a 3-foot putt for birdie at the par-5 16th. He birdied the round's first two holes to extend the one-stroke lead he had to start the day.

When other players mounted challenges on the back nine, Furyk kept them at bay with birdies at Nos. 13 and 14.

"Every time I made a mistake, like I did on 11 and 16, I came right back and hit good golf shots to put it away," Furyk said. "I'm proud of that."

The last time Furyk led after 54 holes was at the U.S. Open, where he won his first major title and finished with a final score of 272, tying the tournament record held by Woods, Jack Nicklaus and Lee Janzen.



Marcus Allen rushed for 12,243 yards during his career.

NFL Hall of Fame honors five in 2003

CANTON, Ohio — They starred on NFL Sundays, so it's fitting that's when they will enter the Hall of Fame.

For the first time in its 40-year history, the Pro Football Hall of Fame will hold its induction ceremony on a Sunday, honoring the 2003 class of Marcus Allen, Hank Stram, Elvin Bethea, Joe DeLamielleure and James Lofton.

The Hall switched the ceremony from its usual Saturday morning slot to help accommodate thousands of out-of-town visitors, many of whom wanted to attend both the induction and Monday's Hall of Fame exhibition game.

The Kansas City Chiefs play the Green Bay Packers this year.

"Having the enshrinement on Saturday made it difficult for people to get to both events," Hall spokesman Joe Horrigan said. "This makes it one less day of commitment. It helps our visiting Hall of Famers, many of whom are still working and have commitments elsewhere."

There will be more visiting Hall of Famers — wearing those familiar yellow jackets — than ever before.

As part of its 40th anniversary, the Hall of Fame invited all 144 living members to attend this year's "NFL Homecoming" weekend and 115 made their way to Canton.

It's the second time in three years that all the members have been invited back. A 2000 reunion was so successful that commissioner Paul Tagliabue initiated this year's homecoming.

"Ever since that first reunion, it seems whenever I run into a Hall of Famer, he refers to that gathering and asks me, 'When will we do that again?' The Hall of Fame's 40th anniversary is the perfect occasion."

The switch to Sunday is the Hall's second major change to the festivities in two years. In 2002, the ceremony was moved from the front steps of 2121 George Halas Drive across the street to 20,000-seat Fawcett Stadium.

The switch was made in part because crowds in recent years were too large for the grounds surrounding the Hall.

"All I do is stand inside by the door, and I get all the free tickets I want."



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By Kevin Kilgore

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